

# **ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2003 – 2004**



**Northern Territory Government**

Department of Community Development, Sport & Cultural Affairs

# ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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John Ah kit MLA  
Minister for Local Government  
Parliament House  
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting to you, on behalf of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, established under the *Animal Welfare Act*, the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2004 as required by regulation 13 of the Animal Welfare Regulations.

Yours sincerely

Chairperson  
December 2004

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## **CHAIRPERSON'S OVERVIEW**

Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Report for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. This report summarises the activities and achievements of the Advisory Committee during the 2003/2004 reporting year.

One of the key roles of Advisory Committee has been to advise the Minister for Local Government on animal welfare legislation and investigate and report on animal welfare matters referred to it by the Minister. Some of the major issues referred to the Advisory Committee by the Minister during the year included the Criminal Code Amendment Bill, membership of the Pet Industry Advisory Council on the Advisory Committee and recommendations made by the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare. Amendments to the Animal Welfare Act saw the banning of horse firing and the tail docking of dogs.

Another function of the Advisory Committee has been to participate in the development of codes of practice and the review of adopted codes of practice. During 2003/2004 the Advisory Committee considered the adoption of a number of codes of practice relating to the welfare of animals including a Code of Practice for The Humane Treatment of Captive and Wildlife Australian Crocodiles, a Code of Practice for The Humane Control of Foxes and a Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Feral Pigs.

The year also saw the appointment of Ms Alison Boardman to the Advisory Committee, to represent the interests of the RSPCA (NT) Inc. Ms Alison Boardman replaced long term member Mr Jim McNally as the representative for the RSPCA (NT) Inc and Mr Steve Walton was nominated and appointed by the Minister as the alternate member replacing Mr Roy Kingham. I would like to like to thank both Mr McNally and Mr Kingham for the valuable contribution they made to the Advisory Committee and to animal welfare in the Northern Territory.

In closing I wish to indicate that I must relinquish my role as Chair of the Charles Darwin University's Animal Ethics Committee due to my role change to Pro Vice Chancellor, Training and Learning. Consequently I must also relinquish my role as Chair of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and I wish to thank the members for their valued contributions and support during my time with the Committee.

**CHARLES WEBB**

## LEGISLATIVE CHARTER

A Bill for the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 19 August 1999 and was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 20 October 1999. Assent to the Act was given by the Administrator on 10 November 1999 and was brought into effect on 27 March 2000.

The objectives of the Act are to –

- ensure that animals are treated humanely;
- prevent cruelty to animals; and
- promote community awareness about the welfare of animals.

## ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee is a statutory body established by the Minister for Local Government under section 69 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* and is responsible to the Minister.

The Act provides for an Advisory Committee of at least eight members appointed in writing by the Minister in accordance with regulation 6 of the Animal Welfare Regulations.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The functions of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to –

- (a) advising the Minister about animal welfare legislation and other matters relevant to animal welfare;
- (b) investigating and reporting on matters relevant to animal welfare referred to it by the Minister;
- (c) participating in the development of codes of practice and the review of adopted codes of practice;
- (d) providing advice to bodies, organisations or the general community on programs for the improvement of community awareness about animal welfare; and;
- (e) any other functions prescribed by the Animal Welfare Regulations.

No further functions have been prescribed under the Animal Welfare Regulations.

## ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee consists of eight members appointed by the Minister for Local Government pursuant to regulation 6 of the Animal Welfare Regulations. The members were nominated by, and represent the interests of the following organisations –

- Animal welfare organisation incorporated in the NT (RSPCA NT Inc);
- Australian Veterinary Association Ltd;
- Local Government Association of the Northern Territory;
- Agency having the responsibility for the administration of the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* (Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs);
- Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development (Industry and Fisheries);
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc;
- Northern Territory University; and
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (Parks and Wildlife Commission)

Membership of the Advisory Committee as at 30 June 2003 was as follows:

### ***Professor Charles Webb (Chairperson)***

Professor Webb was re-appointed as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002. Professor Webb is the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Higher Education and Research), Northern Territory University, and is the Chair of the University's Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee.

### ***Alison Boardman***

Alison Boardman was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 1 April 2004 following the resignation of Mr Jim McNally. Ms Boardman is the Secretary of the RSPCA (NT) Inc, which represents an animal welfare organisation incorporated in the Territory.

***Dr Stephen Cutter***

Dr Cutter was appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002 to represent the Australian Veterinary Association Ltd. Dr Cutter is a veterinarian and practices in Howard Springs.

***Mr Stuart Kenny***

Mr Kenny was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 27 June 2003 to represent the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc. Mr Kenny is the Executive Director of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc.

***Mr William Stuchbery***

Mr Stuchbery was appointed a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 June 2002. Mr Stuchbery is the Director of Local Government representing the Agency having responsibility for the administration of the Act, namely the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs.

***Dr Kevin de Witte***

Dr de Witte was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002 and represents the Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development. Dr de Witte is the Regional Veterinary Officer in Katherine and is the Northern Territory's representative on the National Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, Animal Welfare Committee.

***Mr Philip Hauser***

Mr Hauser was re-appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002 and represents the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment (Parks and Wildlife Commission Section). Mr Hauser has been a Ranger for over twenty years and is actively involved in wildlife and park management activities, including feral animal control and urban wildlife management programs.

***Mrs Judy Joyce***

Mrs Joyce was appointed as a member of the Advisory Committee on 23 July 2002. Mrs Joyce is an Alderman with the Palmerston City Council and represents the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory.

**ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ALTERNATE MEMBERS**

The Animal Welfare Regulations provide for the Minister to appoint alternate members of the Advisory Committee.

The alternate members and their representative body for the year ending 2003/2004 are listed below.

Mr Steve Walton	RSPCA (NT)
Dr David McClelland	Australian Veterinary Association Ltd
Mr Russell Naismith	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
Mr Peter Herden	Department of Community Development, Sport & Cultural Affairs
Dr Diana Pinch	Department of Business, Industry & Resource Development (Primary Industry and Fisheries)
Mr John Armstrong	Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
Mrs Hemali Seneviratne	Northern Territory University
Mr Andrew Bridges	Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment (Parks and Wildlife Commission)

## ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

There is a statutory requirement under Regulation 11 of the Animal Welfare Regulations for the Advisory Committee to hold at least two meetings each year. Two meetings were held in Darwin during the year ending 2003/2004.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting - 22 April 2004
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting - 24 June 2004

The member's attendance at meetings during 2003/2004 is listed in the table below.

Organisation	Name of Member	Meetings Attended
Northern Territory University	Charles Webb (Chair)	2
	Hemali Seneviratne (Alternate)	0
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NT) Inc.	Alison Boardman	1
	Steve Walton (Alternate)	0
Australian Veterinary Association Ltd Northern Territory Division	Stephen Cutter	2
	David McClelland (Alternate)	0
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory	Judy Joyce	1
	Russell Naismith (Alternate)	0
Department of Community Development, Sport & Cultural Affairs	Bill Stuchbery	1
	Peter Herden (Alternate)	0
Department of Business, Industry & Resource Development	Kevin de Witte	0
	Diana Pinch (Alternate)	0
Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association Inc	Stuart Kenny	1
	John Armstrong (Alternate)	0
Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment	Philip Hauser	0
	Andrew Bridges (Alternate Member)	0

## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The Executive Officer, Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs provides executive support and research capacity to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. During 2003 - 2004 Mrs Nicole Kilgour was the Executive Officer.

## ACTIVITIES

The activities of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee during 2003/2004 have been many and varied. The Advisory Committee provided advice to the Minister on a number of animal welfare legislation issues as referred to it by the Minister and investigated and reported on a number of animal welfare matters both locally and nationally. These include;

### **Animal Welfare Act Amendment**

Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act was amended by Parliament on 28 April 2004 to include the banned practices of horse firing and the tail docking of dogs.

### **Criminal Code Amendment Bill No. 3**

On August 2003, Mr Peter Maley MLA, introduced a Bill into Parliament seeking to amend the Criminal code so that it would be a crime to manufacture, sell, purchase or possess any dog or cat fur produce in the Northern Territory.

Cabinet referred the matter to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, and requested that it report by 1 May 2004 to the Minister on possible amendments to the Animal Welfare Act in respect of the manufacture and sale of animal furs.

At the Advisory Committee's meeting on 22 April 2004, the Advisory Committee agreed to support the development of legislation introduced Federally that would bind all States/Territory's prohibiting the import of cat and dog fur. The Chairperson wrote to the Minister and provided advice to this effect.

### **Membership of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council on AWAC**

In 2004, the Minister for Local Government, the Hon John Ah Kit, received a request from the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council for membership on the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council is the peak national industry association representing the commercial pet industry in Australia. The Minister referred this matter on to the Advisory Committee for consideration and advice.

**Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare – ARAZPA**

During 2004 the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry wrote to his State and Territory Government counterparts asking them to support the zoo industry's efforts to align standards across jurisdictions through the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria and encourage all zoos, wildlife parks and aquaria in their jurisdictions to become members of ARAZPA and avail themselves of the expertise and training provided to improve the welfare of captive animals following recommendations made by the National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare. The Minister referred this matter on to the Advisory Committee for its consideration and advice. At the Advisory Committee's meeting on 22 April 2004 the issue was discussed and the Advisory Committee agreed to support the NCCAW recommendations.

The Advisory Committee also considered a number of other issues during 2003/2004 relating to the welfare of animals. These include:

- The use of metal-jawed and soft-jawed traps in the Northern Territory.
- The use of electronic training collars for Dogs
- The use of an electrical devices on camels and buffalo
- National Animal Welfare Strategy
- Code of Ethics for the Keeping and Trading of Birds – Australian Birdkeepers of Australia Inc.
- Guideline G3.2 Humane Killing and Processing of Crustaceans
- Practice of Horse Firing
- Standards for the Care and Treatment of Rodeo Livestock
- RSPCA Australia – Policies and Position Papers 2004 Edition
- The tail docking of dogs

## CODES OF PRACTICE

One of the functions of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee as prescribed under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* is to participate in the development of model codes of practice and the review of adopted codes of practice. The model codes of practice are intended as a set of guidelines for “best practice” standards for the handling, care, management and treatment of animals. The Codes of Practice adopted under the *Animal Welfare Act 1999* are not mandatory, although they can be used as evidence in a court hearing.

The Advisory Committee considered the following national model codes of practice during 2003/2004.

**Code of Practice for the Humane Treatment of Captive and Wild Australian Crocodiles** – The purpose of this Code is to recommend minimum standards for the humane treatment of crocodiles based on current knowledge and practice.

**Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Foxes** – The aim of this code is to provide information and guidance to vertebrate pest managers responsible for the control of foxes. It includes advice on how to choose the most humane, target specific, cost effective and efficacious technique for reducing the negative impact of foxes.

**Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Rabbits** – The purpose of this code of practice is to provide information and guidance to vertebrate pest managers responsible for the control of rabbits. It includes advice on how to choose the most humane, target specific, cost effective and efficacious technique for reducing the negative impact of rabbits.

**Code of Practice for the Humane Control of Feral Pigs** – The aim of this Code of Practice is to provide information and guidance to vertebrate pest managers responsible for the control of feral pigs. It includes advice on how to choose the most humane, target specific, cost effective and efficacious technique for reducing the negative impact of feral pigs.

## **EDUCATION AND PROMOTION**

A Pet Expo was held in April 2004 at the Royal Darwin Show grounds. The Pet Expo is an annual event that is organised by various animal and bird clubs, the RSPCA and Darwin and Palmerston City Councils to promote responsible pet ownership. The Pet Expo provides an opportunity for pet owners to learn more about their pets from experts in the field and includes pet handling demonstrations, dog agility trials and dog and cat grooming.

## **CONCLUSION**

During 2003/2004, the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee made a valuable contribution to animal welfare in the Northern Territory and will continue to strive towards improving animal welfare in the Northern Territory, raising community awareness and providing expert advice to the Minister on animal welfare issues.